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"OH! CAPTAIN KERSON," ELSIE SAID, "I HAVE BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU, AND THE TRAIN HAS LEFT."

REGINALD KERSON'S SECRET.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

THE MANOR.

Sunnythorpe Manor was the principal residence in the village which bore that name. It had been in the possession of the Musgroves from generation to generation, until it at last fell into the hands of the Misses Musgrove, three maiden ladies, daughters of the late owner. The family had ever been famed for their extraordinary beauty, traces of which yet remained in the no longer youthful countenances of the former, who, notwithstanding their silver hair, were still considered as decidedly handsome.

The drawing-room in which they were now seated, if not modernly, was elegantly furnished, and as the reclining rays of an August sun fell on the rich purple of curtains and upholstery, and glanced off to the massive gilt frames of the valuable pictures, there was nothing wanting and nothing existing, which could not satisfy the most fastidious taste.

"So Effie will be here to-morrow!" said the eldest of the three ladies, as, removing her gold spectacles, she passed an open letter to her sisters.

"Poor child!" returned one of the latter, whilst perusing the same. "These second marriages seldom make home the same place to the first family, and for poor Edward's sake we will do all in our power to make her happy."

Poor Edward was an only brother who had died but one year since, leaving a young widow, who had within the last month married again, a proceeding against which her youthful daughter rebelled, as though by so doing her mother had entailed upon her the greatest misery imaginable.

"Oh, aunties, do let me live with you. I am so miserable," she wrote, and the sympathies of the ladies being wholly with their niece, whom they considered as deeply injured as she did herself by the step their sister-in-law had taken, they at once responded to her wish.

"She shall never enter the Manor whilst we live," said Eleanor, the youngest, referring to the latter, when after reading Effie's letter she returned it to the other.

"Most indecent I consider it," Matilda, the eldest, rejoined. "Edward scarcely cold in his grave before she takes another husband; but ring the bell, Sarah, for lights! I have no patience to discuss the subject."

However, notwithstanding this assertion, it was long after the curtains had been drawn, shutting out the glorious moonlight in which the grounds of Singlethorpe had become bathed, that Edward's widow, with all her sins and vanity, was fully commented upon.

"I wonder whom she resembles most!" said Eleanor, thinking of the expected niece, whom

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